8: Lužbetak E-4 (no date) 1951 RH1 Caucasia RH1

II. MARRIAGE

Chapter II

Prohibited Mating

We shall begin our study of the North Caucasian marriage with a negative, but a very important, question: Which persons may *not* be mates? The next chapter will tell us which persons are not only not excluded from mating, but are regarded as *preferred*, or even *obligatory*, mates.

§ 1. THE RULE OF MONOGAMY

1. Extent and Frequency of Polygamy in the Caucasus

As a general rule the NORTHWESTERN CAUCASIANS content themselves with one wife,[1] although both the *Abkhaz* and the *Cherkess* consider polygyny just as lawful as monogyny. After the Soviet government had prohibited plural marriages, polygyny indeed became extremely rare (today it is found only by way of exception here and there among old "incorrigible" Kabardians), but the people still maintain that as long as a man can afford two wives and can feed and clothe them properly, he is just as much in the right as the monogamist,[2] the Soviet penal law notwithstanding.

According to a report of John de Lucca, a Dominican missionary, *(Relations des Tartares, Percopites et Nogaies, des Circassiens, Mingréliens et Géorgiens)* the seventeenth century Circassians recognized polygyny as a lawful institution; however, they seldom made use of the right.[3] In a report from 1502 *(Della Vita dei Zychi, altrimenti chiamati Circassi)*, Interiano mentions that the natives heartily approved of plurality of wives.[4] Our sources, therefore, tell us that polygyny has been in practice in Northwest Caucasia for more than 450 years, always, indeed, more as an exception than as a rule.

The practice certainly does not owe its existence to Mohammedan missionaries. The Cherkess conversion was very superficial till the Murid wars, when a common hatred against the Russians united them under the Moslem

[1] N. Dubrovin, *Istorija vojny i vladyčestva russkich na Kavkaze*, Tome I, Bk. I, p. 138. A. Byhan, *La civilisation caucasienne*, (Paris, 1936), p. 154.

[2] A. Ladyženskij, "Das Familiengewohnheitsrecht der Tscherkessen," *Zeitschrift für vergleichende Rechtswissenschaft*, XLV (1930), pp. 191, 195.

[3] Ladyženskij, *op. cit., p. 184.*

[4] R. Erckert, "*Der Kaukasus und seine Völker*," p. 67.

8: Lužbetak E-4 (no date) 1951 RH1 Caucasia RH1

595 banner of Ghâzi-Mullah and Shamyl.[5] Before that time they were only "indif-
797 ferent disciples of Mohammed," as a report from the first half of the nineteenth century has it,[6] or "without any religion," as Güldenstädt pictured the situation in the 18th century.[7] In other words, the conversion of the Cherkess to Islamism was relatively recent, while polygyny is an old institution. It is beyond the least shadow of doubt that the Cherkess were not Mohammedans when Interiano visited them in 1502. Polygyny of the Cherkess certainly antedates the introduction of the *šar'ia* (Islamic law) into Northwest Caucasia.

Passing over to the NORTHEASTERN CAUCASIANS, we find polygyny a recognized institution among them also. There can be no doubt about the practice existing among the *Chechens*;[8] in fact one of the Chechen tribes (Ingushi) seemed to make use of the right rather frequently. Grabovskij claimed that plurality of wives was of "very frequent" occurrence and that "many" Ingushi had two wives and occasionally three. Moreover, he goes so far as to say that this practice was not limited to the privileged families (as was the case with the Northwestern Caucasians), but that it was rather common to see a "pauper" with two wives.[9] Count Potocki had claimed, about a hundred years earlier, that some Ingushi had as many as five wives.[10]

Although the Chechens are Mohammedans, polygyny antedates their conversion to Islamism. According to Bašir Dalgat, a Chechen by birth, Islamism dates from the time when Chechen migrated to Ichkeria (16th century A. D.) and to the highlands (17th and 18th century). It was then that they lost contact with the Christian Georgians and fell into completely Islamic surroundings (the Daghestanians, Kumyks and Kabardians). Gradually the Chechens went over to Mohammedanism. One of the Chechen tribes, the Ingushi, living near the Georgian Military Road, the only agreeable road from Christian Georgia to Christian Russia, remained unsympathetic toward the new religion. As a counteraction against Islamic proselytism, Russian missionaries in the first half of the eighteenth century began a Christian revival among the Ingushi, resulting in a bitter struggle between Mohammedanism and Christianity. Finally in 1862 the Christian Cross had to give way to the ever-expanding Crescent.[11]

Almost a hundred years before the final submission of the Ingushi to Islamic law, Güldenstädt observed that they "marry several women, just as the Mohammedans do, but unlike the latter, they eat pork." Hence, though not yet fully Islamized, the Ingushi practiced polygamy.[12]

---

[5] G. Zawadowski, "Les Musilmans du Caucase," *En Terre d'Islam*, XVIII (1943), No. 23, p. 162 f.

[6] J. A. Longworth, *A Year among the Cherkess*, I, p. 239.

[7] *Beschreibung der kaukasischen Länder*, p. 135. "Das Volk lebt ohne Religion" is not to be understood literally.

[8] G. Vertepov, "Inguli," *Terskij Sbornik*, II (1892), No. 2, p. 87.

[9] N. Grabovskij, "Ekonomičeskij i domašnij byt žitelej gorskago učastka Inguševskago okruga," SSKG, III (1870), p. 21.

[10] Count J. Potocki, *Voyage dans les steps d'Astrakhan et du Caucase*, II, p. 127.

[11] B. Dalgat, "Die alte Religion der Tschetschenen," *Anthropos*, III (1908), pp. 730 f. For the Islamization of the Chechens, see Vertepov, "Inguli," *Terskij Sbornik*, II (1892), No. 2, p. 87. Polidaev, *Gorcy severnago kavkaza*, p. 18.

[12] Güldenstädt, *Beschreibung der kaukasischen Länder*, p. 151.

8: Lužbetak E-4 (no date) 1951 RHl Caucasia RHl

The *Lesghians*, who are geographically and linguistically related to the Chechens, likewise countenance polygamous marriages, but, here polygyny is a privilege that has always been reserved for a few. It is to be noted that these privileged personages seldom espouse more than two women.[13]

The largest and the most important people of the Lesghian group are the Avars. Speaking of these people, L'vov tells us expressly that only relatively few men can boast of two or at most three wives.[14]

The Lesghians were the first to be Islamized and their conversion was the most thorough. The Laks, for example, accepted the Koran as early as the 116th year of the hegira A. D. 777. By the end of the ninth century Mohammedanism was firmly rooted among the Daghestanian mountaineers.[15]

Hence, to discover the pre-Islamic condition of the Lesghians, we must go to the early Persian and Arabian writers. They inform us that when Islamism was introduced into Daghestan, the people were all followers of Zoroastrianism. These reports are confirmed by the fact that today *there* are still not a few traces of Avestic teaching in the Caucasus and in Daghestan in particular.[16] Attempts to Christianize the Daghestanians had been made at first by Armenian, Georgian, and Byzantine missionaries, then, in the thirteenth century by the Roman Catholic Church.[17] But in spite of all Christian missionary activity, pre-Islamic Daghestan must be classified as Avestic.

Polygyny is in full accord with Zoroastrianism, no less than with Mohammedanism, and therefore there is no reason why we should place plural marriages in the Mohammedan period and exclude them from Avestic times. Ahura Mazda Himself is supposed to have had a number of wives, and Zoroaster, his Prophet, according to tradition, had three. In fact, Avesta (Vend. iii. 3) actually encourages polygyny by teaching that in the household of the just, "both women and children abound" (Geiger, *Ostiranische*, pp. 244, 247). Polygyny was ex-

---

[13] M. Kovalevskij, *Zakon*, II, p. 166.

[14] N. L'vov, "Domašnaja i semejnaja žizn dagestanskich gorcev avarskago plemeni," SSKG, III (1870), p. 20.

[15] For the Islamization of Daghestan see R. Erckert, *Der Kaukasus*, pp. 152—156; for the conversion of the Laks see Said Gabiev, "Laki, ich prolloe i byt," SMOMPK, XXXVI (1906), p. 14.

[16] Abû Ḥamîd el-Andalûsî writes about the Lesghians: "They have no religion, and pay no taxes. If a man dies they hand him over to men in houses under the earth, who cut up the members of the deceased, remove the flesh entirely from the bones, collect it together on one side, and give it to ravens to devour; they stand near with bows to keep off other birds from eating any of the flesh. If a woman dies they hand her over to other men (*var.* women) under the earth, who remove her bones, and give her flesh to vultures, while they stand by with knives to hinder other birds from approaching the flesh." Abû Ḥamîd el-Andalûsî is here referring to the Kubachi, a Dargwa-speaking people. J. Abercromby, *A Trip through the Eastern Caucasus*, p. 290. Of the Colchi Aelian writes in his *Historical Miscellanies*, iv. 1 (c. A. D. 200), "The Colkhi place their dead into skins and sew them up and then hang them up in trees." Both of these practices are traces of Zoroastrianism. "To bury a body," according to Sir Denison Ross, "would defile the pure earth, which is one of the gifts of Ahuramazda, and to burn it would defile his symbol, the Sacred Fire. Bodies are therefore exposed on towers (*dkhma*) specially constructed for the purpose, to be devoured by birds of prey." (Cited by Henry Field, *Contributions to the Anthropology of Iran*, Anthropological Series Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago, December 15, 1939.)

[17] J. F. Baddeley, *op. cit.*, II, p. 39.

595 pressly recognized as lawful as early as the composition of the Mâtigân-i-Hazâr Datistân.[17*]

[101] On the southern slopes of the Caucasus, in high isolated valleys, we find the GEORGIAN mountain tribes, the Khevsurs, Tushi, Pshavs and Svans, who, owing to their isolation, have preserved the ancient Georgian culture better by far than their brothers in the lowlands, and therefore, when speaking of the Georgians, we shall limit ourselves as much as possible to these four tribes.[17**]

Formerly plural marriages were of frequent occurrence in *Khevsuria*. "In former times," writes Nansen, "polygyny was general," or in the words of the original, "war früher an der Tagesordnung."[18] By "formerly" we mean before the conversion of the Khevsurs to the Orthodox Church.[19] But a deeply ingrained customary law cannot be easily "repealed" and such is the case in Khevsuria in regard to the right of having more than one wife; for, even today, although rarely, some Khevsurs still insist on marrying several women.[20] The *Svans* are "monogamists" but, like the Khevsurs, they gave

[586] up plural marriages only after their conversion to Christianity. They are monogamists officially and economically, but, like the Khevsurs, they are sexually polygamous: in order to evade the law of the Church, the Khevsurs and the Svans introduced extremely easy divorce, a form of *successive* polygamy. Divorce is so frequent and easy (almost an annual affair) that we hesitate to call it monogamy.[21] G. Radde, in his monograph on the Khevsurs, claimed that many had been divorced and remarried ten times before they were 35 years of age.[22]

And now if we pass on to the non-Caucasian neighbours of the North Caucasian tribes, we find that the Mohammedan as well as the Christian OSSETES countenance polygyny, but as elsewhere it is rare, as rare as wealth.[23]

[585] As a rule, only the two highest classes, the princes and the *aldârs* could afford more than one wife. In fact, there are even special *adats* which seem to reserve the privilege for these classes.[24]

The TURCO-TARTARS of the Caucasus have had a great share in the moulding of modern Caucasian culture and consequently demand our consideration.

Vambéry in his *Die primitive Kultur des turko-tatarischen Volkes* (pp. 71 f) assures us that not even the slightest traces of polygyny can be found among the primitive Turco-Tartars. In fact their language lacks such terms as "secondary wife," "bastard," and "prostitution."[25]

17* *Hasting's Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, V, p. 745.

17** The Svans are "Georgians" only in a broad sense of the word, meaning "South Caucasians."

18 F. Nansen, *Through the Caucasus to the Volga*, p. 58; *Durch den Kaukasus zur Wolga*, p. 39.

19 G. Radde, *Die Chewsuren und ihr Land*, p. 90.

20 C. Hahn, *Bilder aus dem Kaukasus*, p. 82; A. Byhan, *La civilisation caucasienne*, p. 114. R. Eristov, "O Tušino-Pšavo-Chevsurskom Okruge," ZKO, III (1855), p. 113.

21 F. Bodenstedt, *Die Völker des Kaukasus*, I, p. 282. N. Dubrovin, *Istorija*, Tome I, Bk. II, p. 109.

22 Radde, *op cit.*, p. 113. Cf. R. Briffault, *The Mothers*, II, pp. 269 ff.

23 Dubrovin, *op. cit.*, Tome I, Bk. I, p. 329.

24 Leontovič, *Adaty kavkazskich gorcev*, II, p. 12, § 10; p. 14, § 27; p. 16, a 40.

25 Schmidt-Koppers, *Völker und Kulturen*, p. 204.

1 [Sic -- Analyst]

8: Lužbetak E-4 (no date) 1951 RHI Caucasia RHI

595

According to a missionary's report dating from the year 1750, the League Tartars round the city of Derbend "drink wine without reserve and marry only one woman," and, in spite of being Mohammedans, lead such unorthodox lives, that the Persians can hardly recognize anything Mohammedan about them.[26] But such was not the case with all the Tartars in the Caucasus.[27] The Karachai,[28] Kumyks[29] and Nogai[30] are polygynists, though they seldom avail themselves of their legal privilege.

2. Problems regarding Polygamy

Before we go over to the problems and possible solutions regarding polygamous marriages in North Caucasia, a glance at the following table will help us recall the various customary laws of the North Caucasian peoples and how they differ from those of their neighbours. We have said nothing about polyandry because nowhere in the Caucasus is it a recognized institution.

TABLE 5

Polygamy in Caucasia

	PEOPLES	Adats Permit		Polygyny is Pre-Islamic	Enjoyed by Rich Alone	Usually Restricted to Bigyny
		Polyandry	Polygyny			
North-Western	Abkhaz	—	+	+	+	+
	Cherkess	—	+	+	+	+
North-Eastern	Chechens	—	+	+	—	+
	Lesghians	—	+	+	+	+
Southerners	Khevsurs	—	+		—	+
	Pshavs	—	+			+
	Tushi	—	+			+
	Svans	—	+			+
OSSETES		—	+	+	+	+
Turco-Tatars	Derbend	—	?			
	Kumyks	—	+		+	+
	Nogai	—	+		+	+
	Karachai	—	+		+	+

[26] J. Hanway, *An historical account of the British trade over the Caspian Sea: with a journal of travels through Russia*, London, 1753, I, p. 374.

[27] *ibid.*

[28] Gróf Zichy Jenő, *Kaukázusi és közép-ázsiai utazásai*, Part I: Dr. Jankó János, *Néprajzi gyüteménye leirása*, Budapest, 1897, p. 44.

[29] Gadži-Magoma-Debirov, "Dagestanskija predanija i tsevšrija," SMOMPK, IV (1884), No. 2, p. 31.

[30] Jankó, *l. c.*

595 (1) Custom permits *all* North Caucasians and their neighbours, whether Christian or Mohammedan, to marry more than one wife. The Tartars near the city of Derbend in the eighteenth century are the only exception, but even in this single case, it ist not certain whether they were monogamists *de jure* or only *de facto*.

[177] (2) Everywhere polygyny is *pre-Islamic*, even if previous to their conversion to Islamism the particular tribe happened to be Christian. We might rightly, therefore, inquire into the possible origin of polygyny in the Caucasus. Polygyny, if borrowed at all, was not borrowed as an *isolated* institution. On the contrary, it seems to be a North Caucasian possession, first of all, as old as the practice [594] of levirate (*infra*, pp. 71—75). Furthermore, it seems to be a North Caucasian [614] cultural possession as old as the economic, social, and religious structure of the North Caucasian family itself. Here we understand " family " in its broad sense, including the joint-family and sib. We cannot now describe this family structure in detail. Briefly, by " the economic, social, and religious structure of the family " we understand that the family in North Caucasia has been and in many places still is the *raison d'être* of the individual.[304] Whatever the individual does or whatever is done to him or for him has only one aim, the perpetuation and [581] prosperity of the family. Now, in the mind of the North Caucasian, polygyny is an immense asset and at times absolutely indispensable for the economic, social, and religious life of the all-important and solely-important family.

593 *Economically* considered, the wife is extremely important. In the North 562 Caucasus it is the wife who does most of the work (*infra*, pp. 156—159). In fact, sometimes a rich Avar will marry a son to a poor girl or to a widow of a lower class, with whom he is forbidden all communication, in order to have an additional worker in the house.[21] Moreover, a wife is not only a *worker*; she 840 is the " *worker-producing* " organ of the family. Even though boys are preferred (*infra*, pp. 159 ff), girls prove to be good and valuable workers and bring in, at times, a large brideprice (*infra*, pp. 82—91). Now, the more wives there are in the household, the more " worker-producing " organs there are, and by that very fact, at least in the mind of the natives, the family becomes so much the more economically healthy and secure.

The *religious* structure of the family may have contributed just as much to [769] the rise of polygyny as did the economic form of life. The most sacred duty of the individual and of the individual family is, or at least has been, to perpetuate itself, and thus to perpetuate the cult of the ancestors. It is a fact throughout North Caucasus that only a *son* can perpetuate the family and prevent the greatest calamity imagineable, its extinction. But a wife is precisely the " *boy-producing* " organ. If this organ is lacking or fails to function the family is doomed. Today one of the main motives for taking a second wife is sterility.[22] Or again, a second wife will be acquired if the first gives birth only to girls.

---

[304] According to ancient customary laws.

[21] L'vov, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

[22] Cf. K. Maćavariani, " Nĕkotoryja čerty iz žizni Abchazcev. Polołenie ženščiny v Abchazii," SMOMPK, IV (1884), No. 2, p. 42. E. G. Pčelina, " Rodil'nye obyčai u osetin," SE, 1937, No. 4, p. 88.

8: Lužbetak E-4 (no date) 1951 RH1 Caucasia RH1

We may go a step further and say that if it is the wife who secures the family economically and religiously, the family will be respected by others in proportion to the number of mothers it has. In a word, the *social* status of the family depends on the economic and religious status, and these in turn depend very much on the number of wives. Doubtless, investment in wives is the best investment of any North Caucasian family.

Polygyny being part and parcel of the family organization of the North Caucasian peoples, we must, therefore, in seeking the origin of the institution, go back beyond Islamic times, beyond Christian and Avestic times, and perhaps beyond historical times. North Caucasian polygyny was born when the North Caucasian family organization was born.

A corollary to the question regarding the origin of polygyny in North Caucasia is the enquiry into the motives for polygynous unions. The sexual factor has relatively little significance. Not lust, not desire to have a young wife, not a surplus of women, but craving for a large family, for many labourers, for economic and religious prepetuation of the family, for the rise in social prestige—these are the motives that generally induce a man to marry a second wife.

(3) A glance at Table 5 under the columns "Usually restricted to bigyny" and "Enjoyed by rich alone" will reveal that plural marriages among the North Caucasian peoples and their neighbours are usually cases of *bigamy* and that polygyny is more the exception than the rule. This state of affairs would seem to contradict what we have just said about the importance of polygyny. Why is this all-important institution practiced only by a *few* and generally *limited* to one and at the most two additional wives? Why this difference in theory and practice? This fact is all the more striking because all our North Caucasian peoples are Mohammedans and according to the Koran, iv. 3 and Islamic tradition everyone is entitled to have up to four wives.

The first reason, and no doubt, the most important one is that Nature herself prevents universal polygyny. The relative number of males and females is dictated by a biological law, the sex ratio rarely exceeding 100:110 in favour of either sex.[33] Usually the ratio is 106 males to 100 females, but, we must remember, child mortality is far greater among boys than girls, so that in the long run the ratio of marriageable persons is about 100:100.[34] Nowhere in the world does it approximate a 1:2 ratio, which would be necessary to make bigyny a general practice.[35]

Theoretically speaking, a surplus of women could result in the Caucasus from blood-feuds, dangerous occupations, infanticide, and other major disturbances affecting the *male* population alone. Such a preponderance of female sex would necessitate many of them remaining unmarried or several women would be obliged to marry one man. But are there such major disturbances affecting the sex ratio in the Caucasus? Since the Soviet government prohibits polygyny and in recent decades polygyny has become extremely rare, it would seem much

---

[33] R. H. Lowie, *An Introduction to Cultural Anthropology*, (New York, 1947), p. 243.
[34] Günther, *Formen und Urgeschichte der Ehe*, p. 100.
[35] R. H. Lowie, *Social Organization*, p. 113.

8: Lužbetak E-4 (no date) 1951 RHI Caucasia RHI

162 595 more methodologically correct to study the relation of sex ratio to polygyny in *pre-Soviet* times. The Russian Imperial Geographic Society published the following statistics for the year 1897 in the *Isvěstija Kavkazskago Otděla* (XII [1898], pp. 27 f). These statistics are sufficiently reliable, and even if they disagree with other statistics of this period, the discrepencies do not affect our essential argument: the sex ratio is a serious hindrance to the practice of polygyny.[86]

TABLE 6

Population of Caucasia in 1897

A. North Caucasus

GOVERNMENT	PROVINCE (County)	MALES	FEMALES	TOTAL
Kuban		976,900	945,873	1,922,773
	Ekaterinodar	124,789	119,138	243,927
	Batalpashinsk	110,824	107,401	218,225
	Yeysk	139,923	136,713	276,636
	Maikop	145,138	139,030	284,168
	Kavkaz	126,565	122,736	249,301
	Labinsk	155,615	152,222	307,837
	Teminsk	174,046	168,633	342,679
Terek		487,489	445,996	933,485
	Vladikavkaz	73,461	64,372	137,833
	Grozny	119,615	108,033	227,648
	Kizlyar	51,715	48,035	99,750
	Nalchik	53,202	49,721	102,223
	Pyatigorsk	93,403	96,801	180,204
	Tsundzhensk	59,122	56,775	115,897
	Khasan-Yurt	36,971	32,259	69,230
Stavropol		446,963	429,335	876,298
	Stavropol	84,473	81,732	166,205
	Alexandropol	91,758	89,146	180,904
	Medveyzhensk	117,761	115,999	233,760
	Novogrigoryevsk	126,583	121,861	248,444
	Others	26,388	20,597	46,985

[86] Besides the statistics of the Russian Imperial Geographic Society of 1897 which we quote below, there are also the following collections of statistics for this period: *Pamjatnaja knižka* (1895), pp. 165—405, which contains very detail statistics of Daghestan indicating the number of households, male and female population of each village; SSKG, V (1870), pp. 51—58, VI (1872), appendix pp. 1—65, VIII (1875), pp. 1—17 (Sostav naselenija Dagestanskoj Oblasti), IX (1876), pp. 20—29 for Andi Province, pp. 4—19 for Western Daghestan, pp. 52 ff for Sakataly; *Sbornik svědenij o Kavkazě*, nine large quarto volumes edited by a special statistical committee under the capable leadership of Seidlitz, especially useful are volumes V (1879) and VIII (1885); *Zapiski Kavkazskago Otděla Imperatorskago Russkago Geografičeskago Obščestva*, V (1862), pp. 135—151 for general statistics, VIII (1873), pp. 1—49 for Daghestan, XVIII (1896); *Terskij Sbornik*, II (1892), pp. 98—102.

8: Lužbetak E-4 (no date) 1951 RH1 Caucasia RH1

162
595

GOVERNMENT	PROVINCE (County)	MALES	FEMALES	TOTAL
Daghestan		300,155	286,481	586,636
	Temir-Khan-Shura	51,127	42,716	93,846
	Avar Province	18,732	18,498	37,230
	Andi	23,546	23,447	46,993
	Gunib	28,641	29,953	58,594
	Dargwa	40,514	41,949	82,463
	Lak (Kazikumukh)	26,368	27,297	53,665
	Kaitago-Tabassaran	47,547	42,159	89,706
	Kurin	39,308	37,241	76,549
	Samur	24,372	23,221	47,593

B. South Caucasus

GOVERNMENT	PROVINCE (County)	MALES	FEMALES	TOTAL
Tiflis		526,349	432,826	958,775
	Tiflis	133,459	94,321	227,780
	Akhalkalak	38,754	34,608	73,362
	Akhaltsikh	37,479	31,665	69,144
	Borchalinsk	104,183	87,473	191,656
	Dushet	37,667	32,258	69,925
	Telav	34,633	30,516	65,149
	Tioneti	18,894	17,944	36,438
	Signakh	53,950	46,147	100,097
Kutais		567,353	508,468	1,075,861
	Kutais	115,395	107,932	223,327
	Artvinsk	29,575	26,881	56,456
	Batum	50,832	34,744	85,576
	Zugdidi	60,577	57,046	117,623
	Lekhgumsk	25,987	24,530	50,517
	Ozurgeti	47,018	45,194	92,212
	Rachinsk	37,728	35,014	72,742
	Tsenaksk	61,558	57,626	119,184
	Sharopansk	83,558	74,168	157,726
	Sukhum	55,165	45,333	100,498
Baku		437,779	351,880	789,659
	Baku	104,420	73,186	177,606
	Gerkchaysk	50,507	50,156	109,663
	Dzhevatsk	48,789	36,267	85,065
	Kuba	61,732	50,469	112,200
	Shemakha	66,547	57,063	123,610

162
595

GOVERNMENT	PROVINCE (County)	MALES	FEMALES	TOTAL
Elizabethpol		479.433	392,124	871,557
	Elizabethpol	90,053	72,125	162,178
	Aresh	33,938	28,979	62,917
	Dzhevanshirsk	37,602	29,403	67,005
	Dzhebraysk	37,001	30,122	67,123
	Tsangezursk	77,074	64,990	142,064
	Kazakh	64,117	48,351	112,468
	Nukhinsk	63,129	53,933	117,062
	Shusha	76,519	64,221	140,740
Erivan		429,689	375,068	804,757
	Erivan	69,588	57,484	127,072
	Alexandropol	88,443	74,992	163,435
	Nakhichevan	53,466	47,476	100,942
	Novobayazetsk	64,225	59,614	123,839
	Surmaly	47,391	41,453	88,844
	Sharup-Daralagezsk	40,968	35,014	75,982
	Echmiadzin	65,608	59,035	124,643
Chernomorsk		31,760	22,468	54,228
	Novopossiysk	19,810	13,945	33,955
	Tuapsinsk	4,346	3,674	8,020
	Sochinsk	7,604	5,549	13,253
Kars		162,723	129,775	292,498
	Kars	76,845	58,539	135,384
	Ardagan	34,933	30,734	65,667
	Kagyzmansk	33,838	25,888	59,726
	Olti	17,107	14,614	31,721

C. Total

Total in NORTH CAUCASUS	2,211,507	2,107,685	4,319,192
Total in SOUTH CAUCASUS	2,674,547	2,249,956	4,929,503
ENTIRE CAUCASUS	4,891,054	4,357,641	9,248,695

A closer examination of these statistics will show that in Northwest Caucasus the female population is *smaller* than the male. However the disproportion is not considerable, varying between 100:102 to 100:104.7. In other words, towards the close of the last century there was, according to our statistics, not only no surplus of women but not enough for every man to have *one* wife.

8: Lužbetak E-4 (no date) 1951 RH1 Caucasia RH1

This deficiency of female mates is certainly one of the main reasons for the infrequency of polygyny despite the great value placed on the institution.

The statistics given for Chechnia reveal a similar situation. And, according to Vertepov, the disproportion was especially great in Ingushetia, 115 men to every 100 women.[37] This is indeed striking because Grabovskij claimed, as we have seen, that plural marriages were "very frequent" in the last quarter of the nineteenth century.[38] "Many" Ingushi had two wives and sometimes three.[39] Even "poor" Ingushi had additional wives.[40] The frequent cases of polygyny in Ingushetia in spite of the unusual surplus of men can perhaps be explained by the strict obligation of the widow to marry her deceased husband's brother. According to Kovalevskij, the levirate among the Chechens was, practically speaking, an obligation, whereas among the Lesghians it was facultative (*infra*, pp. 71 f). Levirate would also explain why even "poor" Ingushi were polygynists; it would also explain why "many" Ingushi had more than one wife.

The sex ratio of the Lesghians, as presented in our statistics, differs somewhat from that of the rest of the Caucasians. Here, in Daghestan, we do have districts with a preponderance of female sex, but it must be noted, the difference is so small that the surplus women could hardly make polygyny a frequent practice. Thus the Avar, Andi, Gunib, Dargwa, Kazikumuk, Kurin and Samur provinces all have practically a 100:100 ratio. The Kaitago-Tabassaran Province has the highest proportion in favour of women, but the difference 100:105 is insignificant. Hence, the balance between the male and female population is a contributing factor to the infrequency of polygyny.[41]

But besides this biological reason there is the universally valid economic reason. Supposing that there were a surplus of women in the Caucasus, there would still be great financial difficulties that would prevent polygyny from becoming general. The poor Caucasian considers himself quite fortunate if he manages to gather enough jingling rubles or mooing cows to purchase one wife, let alone a second or a third.[42] In fact, even the rich Caucasian would find it difficult to purchase a second wife, because the bride price always corresponds to the economic and social position of the contracting parties. Ladyženskij expressly maintains that what keeps the Kabardian and the Cherkess in general

---

[37] G. Vertepov, "Inguši," *Terskij Sbornik*, II (1892), No. 2, p. 99.

[38] Grabovskij, "Ekonomičeskij i domašnij byt žitelej gorskago učastka Inguševskago okruga," SSKG, III (1870), p. 21. Dubrovin is of the same opinion: *Istorija*, Tome I, Bk. I, p. 430.

[39] Grabovskij, *l. c.*

[40] Grabovskij, *l. c.*

[41] In 1926 the sex ratio for Daghestan was practically a perfect balance, 100:103 in favor of the female sex (383,000 males to 405,000 females). F. Nansen, *Through the Caucasus to the Volga*, p. 96.
According to official statistics of 1930 there were more men than women living in the *cities* of Daghestan (1,000 men to 931 women); in the country the proportion was 1,000 men to 1,048 women. R. Kherumian, "Contribution à l'Anthropologie du Caucase," *L'Anthropologie*, LII (1948), No. 1—2, p. 44.
It seems to be quite natural that the city population should show a preponderance of male sex: a considerable portion of the city population are labourers and merchants from various parts of Caucasia, Russia, and Armenia.

[42] A. Ladyženskij, FT, p. 195.

8: Lužbetak E-4 (no date) 1951 RHl Caucasia RHl

from polygyny is, above all, a shortage of rubles.[43] The same holds for the Avars,[44] and, as we learn from Sv̌čin,[45] for the other Lesghians as well: the economic factor plays an important part in making polygyny relatively rare. Klaproth found the institution a veritable luxury in Ossetia, being only for the richest of the rich,[46] in full harmony with the Ossetine *adats* which reserve the right for the two richest classes, the princes and the *aldars*.[47] Grabovskij's report[48] that even the *poor* Ingushi were polygamists we have partially explained by obligatory levirate, which was just as much obligatory for the rich as for the poor. Moreover social stratification (which generally coincides with wealth and poverty) was practically non-existent during Grabovskij's visit in Ingushetia (*infra*, pp. 60 f); therefore, if polygyny is to be found among the Ingushi at all, it must be found also among the "poor" class.

Easy divorce may do away with plural marriages as it did in Khevsuria and Svanetia, but in North Caucasia easy divorce plays only a very insignificant rôle compared with economic and biological factors.

§ 2. THE RULES OF ENDOGAMY AND EXOGAMY

Lowie defines exogamy as "the rule which prescribes that an individual must find a mate outside of his own group, whether that group be the family, the village or some other social unit."[49] The opposite rule "which makes it compulsory for a man to mate within his group is labeled endogamy." Lowie rightly stresses that it is not the *de facto* marriage within one's own group but the *prohibition* of marrying outside it that constitutes endogamy.[50]

1. The Impediment of Consanguinity

Consanguineous marriages are strictly prohibited throughout NORTHWEST Caucasus. In his expedition of 1927 Ladyženskij ascertained that the reports of earlier writers about the abhorrence of incest among the tribes of Northwest Caucasia still exists today. Marriages between members of the same sib, regardless of the degree of remoteness, are considered incestuous.[51]

Among the NORTHEASTERN peoples the practice is not uniform. Ingushian adats are by far stricter than Islamic law in regard to marriages between

---

[43] *ibid.*

[44] L'vov, "Domašnjaja i semejnaja žizn Dagestanskich gorcev avarskago plemeni," SSKG, III (1870), p. 20.

[45] D. Sv̌čin, "Očerk narodonaselenija nravov, i obyčaev Dagestancev," ZKO, II (1853), p. 64.

[46] J. Klaproth, *Voyage au Mont Caucase et en Géorgie*, II, p. 249.

[47] *Leontovič, Adaty kavkazskich gorcev*, II, p. 12, § 10; p. 14, § 27; p. 16, § 40.

[48] "Ekonomičeskij i domašnij byt žitelej gorskago učastka inguševskago okruga," SSKG, III (1870), p. 21.

[49] R. Lowie, *Primitive Society*, p. 16.

[50] *op. cit.*, pp. 16 f.

[51] J. Reinegg, *Allgemeine historisch-topographische Beschreibung des Kaukasus*, II, p. 9; Ladyženskij, FT, p. 198.

565 (1) The upper class, known as *uzdenleg*, the *aldars*,[146] though forming a kind of nobility, cannot be compared with the Kabardian nobles because *any* Tagaurian sib could work itself up to the top of the social ladder through wealth or number.[147] In Digoria the upper class were known as *badulyats*.

(2) The middle class people or *farsagleg* were the free tenants.

[595] (3) The *kavdassarts* were all those born of a secondary wife *(numulus)* or of a concubine. They formed what might be called a bondsmen's class.[148]

[567] (4) The slaves or *gurziag (gurdziag)* is a word derived from "a Georgian," clearly showing that the slaves were mainly prisoners taken in war and raids.

We find similar social ranking among the neighbouring TURCO-MONGOLS. The Kumyks were formerly divided into three classes: (1) the nobles of the first, second, and third order *(uzden)*; (2) the bondsmen or *chagars*; (3) the slaves or *kuls*.[149] The Karachai used to be divided into four classes:[150] (1) the princes *(tav big)*; (2) nobles *(kara-uzden)*; (3) serfs *(ilgyly-kul)*; (4) slaves *(ilglysizkul)*. The Turkomans of Stavropol Government, while still nomads, were perhaps the most classless of all peoples inhabiting the Caucasus, even more so than the Alaghirs and the Chechens.[151] The Kalmucks are divided into three main social ranks: the nobles *(saisan)*, the clergy, and the commoners *(aimak)*.[152]

Now that we have learned the social ranks as they existed before the abolition of slavery in 1867, we are in a position to study the affects of social stratification on mating.

565 582 The NORTHWESTERN CAUCASIANS. We cannot help marvelling at the complicated ranking of the *Cherkess* society. When feudalism was at its height in Circassia, not only were inter-class marriages impossible, but even marriages between persons from different subdivisions of the same class and even between persons of different sub-subdivisions of the same subdivision. Thus a nobleman might not marry a girl unless her family had been raised to nobility about the same time as his.[153] A very similar situation prevailed in *Abkhazia*.[154]

---

[146] They could own land and slaves.

[147] Ladyženskij, *op. cit.*, pp. 439 f.

[148] *Kavdassart* means literally "one born in a stable," while *numulus* means "a nominal or illegitimate wife."

[149] The bondsmen were originally free land-owners, who later became bondsmen by falling into debts which they were unable to pay off. As a result they became subject to their lords even much more than were the Ossetine *farsaglegs*, for the latter had the right to abandon their masters while the *chagars* enjoyed no such right.
For more about the Kumykian social ranks see Ladyženskij, *op. cit.*, pp. 33—37.

[150] For a full description of feudalism among the Karachai in the nineteenth century see E. N. Studeneckaja, "K voprosu o feodalizme i rabstve v Karačae XIX v.," SE, 1937, No. 2—3, pp. 45.

[151] Ladyženskij, *op. cit.*, p. 443.

[152] Zichy, *Kaukázusjæs középázsiai utazásai*, p. 30. (Part I.)

[153] Reineggs, *op. cit.*, I, p. 252. Longworth, *A Year among the* Circassians, I, pp. 228, 278.

[154] P. I. Kovalevskij, *Kavkaz, Narody Kavkaza*, p. 35.

1 n [among the Tagaurians in southern Caucasia.--Analyst]

8: Lužbetak . E-4 (no date) 1951 RHl Caucasia RHl

587 (4) We must disagree with Kovalevskij in his interpretation of the levirate as a vestige of former group marriage.[20] Without offering us any evidence, he takes up the theories of Morgan and Frazer and applies them to the Caucasus. Such an institution as "group marriage" exists nowhere in the world, and to imagine that it has ever existed is mere fancy. In an attempt to explain the origin of preferential mating in the Caucasus we should lay aside all guesswork
[562] and study the culture before us. For example: the unbearably low position of the North Caucasian woman (*infra*, pp. 152—159) may have made her appear as inheritable chattel. After all, the family purchased her, paid a high price for her, and now she constitutes a part of the family property no less than do the horses, cows, and sheep. Moreover, as we have explained above (pp. 44 f), she is more than *ordinary* family property: she is the best family investment, for she is the "worker-producing" and especially the "boy-producing" organ on which depends the economic, religious, and social life of the family. This realization would only too naturally disincline the family to give her up after her husband's
[581] death. As we shall see in the following chapter, mating is not a private affair; it is a strictly family affair, the prime purpose of marriage being the good of the family or sib. She, as it were, belongs more to the *family* that purchased her than to the individual member whose wife she is. Finally, if we consider the pre-Islamic, pre-Christian, and pre-Avestic religion of the mountaineers, we are almost forced to postulate such an institution as widow-inheritance.
[775] The life beyond does not differ from the present, and consequently the departed will need his wife in the nether world just as much as in this life. (We shall have occasion to speak of posthumous marriages! Cf. *infra*, p. 85.) We shall even show that suttee was not unknown in North Caucasus (Cf. *infra*,
[842] pp. 131 f). The wife therefore must remain in the family. Moreover, the deceased needs offspring, a large progeny, just as much after death as during life, for his happiness and honour in the other world depend upon the cult he receives from his descendents. The widow, therefore, must remain in the family and another member must "raise up seed for his brother" and "build up his brother's house." In other words, the levirate is not a survival of a *primitive* culture but rather an institution very intimately connected with the economic, social and religious life of a relatively highly developed culture such as that of pastoral peoples.

595 As a confirmation of what we have just now said about the origin of
[842] Caucasian preferential mating, we wish to describe another institution, still found today in various parts of Caucasus, the so-called *snohačestvo*. A boy-child is married to an adult girl with whom the father may have sexual intercourse as freely as with his own wife. The father is considered as living in lawful concubinage with his son's wife and may do so until the child becomes of age. We wish to stress that this practice is a perfect parallel to widow inheritance. The father "must raise seed" for his son and "build up his house" till he is himself able to do so. The children born of this concubinage belong to the childhusband, sometimes half to him and half to the progenitor. This is

[20] Kovalevskij, *Coutume contemp.*, p. 181.

8: Lužbetak E-4 (no date) 1951 RH1 Caucasia RH1

a widespread institution, for example, among the Dido[21] and the North Tabasaranians of Daghestan,[22] among the Tushi,[23] among the Ossetes,[24] in Southern Russia and Asia. *Snohačestvo* aims to accomplish before puberty what levirate accomplishes after death. 595

[21] Klaproth, *Voyage au Mont Caucase et en Géorgie*, II, p. 74.
[22] "Adaty Južno-Dagestanskich Obščestv," SSKG, III (1875).
[23] Reineggs, *op. cit.*, I, p. 183.
[24] Kovalevskij, *Coutume contemp.*, pp. 177 f. Haxthausen, *op. cit.*, II, p. 101.

585 [776] (7) In a number of instances we have noticed that the dagger or sword was used in connection with the marriage ceremony. The best-man took the bride around the hearth and each time he struck the chain with his dagger. The bride had to enter her new home under an arch of swords or with a dagger or club held above her head. This wedding custom, too, has a religious basis. The household gods of the bride's family have become exceedingly jealous of the bride, because by marrying she has united herself to another family and will now worship other ancestors, abandoning her own. These jealous godlets realize that the best time to enter her new home and to cause countless harm is simultaneously with the bride. Fortunately, these household gods are afraid of daggers.[114] [847] Among the Georgian mountaineers, a mother after having given birth to a child will keep a sword under the pillow as a protection against aerial spirits.[115] Spirits are afraid of the sword for several reasons—at least such is our conjecture. The God of Iron, of the Sword, and of the Hearth-Chain is one and the same god, called Safa. This sword ceremony may perhaps insure [823] Safa's protection against jealous godlets. It may also insure the protection of [769] the departed because *iron* is a means of contacting ancestors. In Ossetia on the [787] "feast of the dedication of clothing" clothes are consecrated and sent to the netherworld by means of an iron knife.[116] The Ingushi get in contact with their departed by means of iron tongs.[117]

(8) The other marriage ceremonies are likewise mainly pastoral in character: horse-racing, submission to the husband, wishes for a rich progeny but always with a disproportion of "nine boys to every blue-eyed girl." Finally, the long elaborate and expensive wedding itself is typical of pastoral peoples.

[606] There are, however, a few traces of a so-called mother-right culture. The rôle played by the mother-in-law in the ceremonies, as we have stressed *(supra,* p. 125), is indeed not inconsistent with the position of the mother of the household in a patriarchal family, but, we must admit that their astounding importance gives them a suspiciously matriarchal colouring: in the ceremonies described, it is the Lesghian mother who welcomes the bride into the house as if she were the head of the family. It is the mother who holds her by the hand as she crosses the threshold. It is the mother's brother who led the bride's horse in the Ingiloi procession from her home to that of her groom. It is the mother who puts the honey into the mouth of the bride as a sign that the bride has a sweet life ahead of her under such an amiable mistress as her mother-in-law. And we should not forget that in the Lesghian engagement it was the mother who presented the engagement gifts which concluded the betrothal contract.[118]

595 585 114 We cannot conclude this chapter without briefly refuting some of Kovalevskij's assumptions. Like so many anthropologists of his day, he was inclined to find traces of an epoch older than that of patriarchy, and older than that of

---

[114] For the custom among the Ossetes see Kovalevskij, *Coutume contemp.*, pp. 170 f.

[115] Cf. Reineggs, *op. cit.*, II, p. 112 f.

[116] Kokiev, *Slepovye soeruženija*, (Vladikavkaz, 1928), p. 38.

[117] Baddeley, *op. cit.*, II, p. 120.

[118] *Supra*, p. 103.

8: Luzbetak E-4 (no date) 1951 RHI Caucasia RHI

matriarchy, even where there were no such traces to be found. The fact that the bride is segregated during the wedding and no older relative of the bridegroom (especially no *male* relative) may see and speak freely with the bride is supposed to be a clear vestige of fraternal polyandry. In other words, there is supposed to have been a time when all male members of the family had access to the bride, for she was the wife of all. Then came a time when, from experience, the Caucasians came to the conclusion that individual marriage was by far better than group marriage or fraternal polyandry. It was, of course, as we are told, not easy to abolish such a deeply ingrained custom, so that the bride had to be kept away from the others. Today the segregation of the bride is supposed to be nothing but a vestige of the means taken against group marriage or fraternal polyandry.[119]

But if that were the case, why is the *groom* hiding, and in fact, even longer and farther away than the bride? Is that a vestige of a kind of sororal polygyny? Moreover, why is the groom hiding *elsewhere*? The best defense against anyone approaching the bride would be if the husband himself were at her side.

Another vestige of group marriage, according to Kovalevskij's fancy, is the ceremony of "tramping on the bed." After the unveiling of the bride, as she is being led into the marriage chamber, all the young people rush in and the first to throw himself on the bed receives a prize. So as not to be accused of mere destructive criticism, we wish here to propose another conjecture (nothing more than a conjecture!), but a conjecture far more plausible than that of Kovalevskij. It is much more probable that we have here a vestige of the *jus primae noctis*. First of all, the ceremony of "tramping on the bed" takes place immediately *before* the groom enters the bridal chamber. If it were a vestige of group marriage or fraternal polyandry, why doesn't the main person take part in the ceremony? Moreover, the *jus primae noctis*, though very often reserved for the chief or father-in-law, is sometimes a privilege reserved for the strongest wedding-guest. In our case, the struggle among the young people to enter the bridal chamber first may be a vestige of a contest to prove who among them is the strongest. The remarkable fact is that in *neighbouring* Southern Russia, until rather recently, it was precisely the strongest wedding-guest who was given the task of deflowering the bride.[120] The Caucasians could have had a similar custom (perhaps even from the same source), which, however, evolved into a ceremony the significance of which has been forgotten.

From among all the juridical aspects of the ceremonies described, the most important is: Which ceremony constitutes the essence of marriage? In other words, at which point of the complicated wedding are the mates actually married? Naturally, where Christian or Mohammedan formal contracts are made, there is usually no doubt about the answer. But we are interested in customary law. Negatively, the marriage is certainly considered complete after the marital act has taken place. To say anything more positive in regard to

[119] Cf. Kovalevskij, *Coutume contemp.*, p. 177.

[120] O. Asboth, "Ein Hochzeitsbrauch in Südrußland," *Archiv für Anthropologie*, XIII, pp. 318 f.

8: Lužbetak E-4 (no date) 1951 RH1 Caucasia RH1

IV. CONCLUSION

Chapter XIV

Conclusion

§ 1. MARRIAGE AND THE FAMILY OF THE CAUCASIANS IN THE LIGHT OF HISTORY

1. Russian (Soviet and Pre-Soviet) Influence

That the Russian military, political, and cultural influence has greatly affected, changed and unified, the marriage and family customs of the various peoples of the Caucasus cannot be denied. We need but recall some of the many facts we have pointed out in our comparative study.

(1) The Russians, we have seen, severely prosecute *polygyny* (*supra*, p. 39) and not without success. The relative scarcity of polygamous unions throughout North Caucasus and the neighbourhood, regardless of how ethnically different the tribes may be, must be attributed, at least in part, to Russian legislation.

(2) In recent times both mates have begun to enjoy greater *freedom of choice*, (*supra*, p. 76), thanks to the Russian insistance on freedom in mating as a *conditio sine qua non* for a legally valid marriage.

(3) We have also observed how rapidly *bride purchase* was disappearing or assuming an entirely different significance throughout the Caucasus, again, at least in part, owing to Russian legislation, industrialization, and education (*supra*, pp. 83, 87, 90).

(4) *Bride price*, *bloodwite*, etc. were formerly measured in cows, horses, sheep, and oxen, but now they are measured in money : not in live stock but in Russian rubles ! (*Supra*, pp. 82—89, 95, 168—179).

(5) The Russian opposition to *bride capture* has helped to make the practice become rare (*supra*, pp. 97 f). It was Russian positive law gaining ascendency over the *patria potestas* and its insistance on freedom of choice that encouraged and even defended elopement (*supra*, p. 98).

(6) The general disappearance of slavery and the associated sociological consequences, e. g., *the marriage impediments*,

(7) the *less severe penalties for sex crimes* which are gradually being adopted by all tribes of Caucasia (*supra*, pp. 175, 180).

(8) and the improvement in the *status of the female sex*, all must be reckoned among the effects of Russian and Soviet influence.

8: Lužbetak E-4 (no date) 1951 RHl Caucasia RHl

among the Ingiloi (Islamized Georgians). It has effected the greatest changes in Daghestan, where it has existed the longest. It assumes a middle position in Circassia and Chechnia, where, however, there are important tribal differences that must be taken into account. The Abadzekhs, Shapsugs, Natukhazh, Beshilbey, and Barakey follow their own customary laws rather than the *šarî'a* much more so than do the Bzhedukh, Beslenians, and Kabardians who place both customary and Islamic law on the same level. In regard to the Chechen tribes, we must remember, the *šarî'a* was not accepted by the Ichkerians and Chechens properly so-called till Shamyl's time, while the Karabulaks, Kists, Galgai and Galashi have never expressly aknowledged it.[2]

Of the non-Caucasians, the Kumyks and the Nogai have been the most thoroughly Islamized,[3] being among the first to accept the Koran. The Ossetes and the Karachai disregard the *šarî'a* almost completely, following their own *adats* instead.[4]

3. Lesser Historical Influences

(1) **Christianity.** Christianity, too, has left its marks on the customary marriage and family law of the Caucasians. For example, one of the strongest counteractions against Avestic *endogamy* in Northwest and South Caucasus was Christianity (*supra*, pp. 53 f). Official *naming* of children (*supra*, p. 143), official *marriage contracts*, some *penal laws* (e. g., *supra*, p. 178), and, in some cases, changes in *divorce laws* and in the practice of *polygyny* (*supra*, p. 42) are certainly of Christian origin.

Christianity, of course, has had the greatest influence among the Georgians of the lowlands, and considerably less among the mountain tribes of Georgia, and still less among the Northwestern Caucasians and Chechens, and least of all among the Lesghians.

(2) **Avesta.** We have found a few traces of Avestic teaching in the marriage and family observances of the Caucasians, such as the rule of *endogamy* among all the Lesghians (and in pre-Christian Georgia). Zoroastrianism is also a possible explanation for the *local endogamy* of the Svans (*supra*, p. 53) and perhaps also for the obligation of purification after childbirth by washing in cow's urine.[5] The sphere of Iranian influence stretched far beyond Georgia and Daghestan. There is no longer any doubt, for example, that the laws of the Vendidats were known also to the Ossetes.[6] Nevertheless, the influence on North Caucasian marriage and family law has been only slight.

(3) **Armenian, Byzantine, and Roman Influences.** There have been other historical causes for the change and unification of the marriage and family *adats* of the Caucasians, such as Armenian, Byzantine, Roman influence etc., but

---

[2] Leontovič, II, p. 233, § 8.

[3] Leontovič, II, p. 233, § 4.

[4] Leontovič, II, p. 232, § 7.

[5] Kovalevskij, *Zakon*, I, pp. 97 f. Cf. also Zacharias, *Protohistory*, p. 351.

[6] Ladyženskij, *op. cit.*, p. 243.

8: Lužbetak E-4 (no date) 1951 RHl Caucasia RHl

these have been felt either exclusively among the Southern Caucasians or have not been very great. The Roman-Byzantine influence was passed on to the North Caucasian tribes mainly through the Armenians and Georgians, which, however, did not affect their customary laws to any appreciable extent. Kovalevskij had a tendency to overemphasize these influences: he believed, for example, that the practice of offering an engagement gift to the bride or her family was of Roman-Byzantine origin,[7] and that the status of the Caucasian women had been greatly affected by Byzantine law.[8]

§ 2. MARRIAGE AND THE FAMILY OF THE CAUCASIANS IN THE LIGHT OF ANTHROPOLOGY

1. Analysis of Caucasian Adats: Predominant Character of North Caucasian Marriage and Family Customary Laws That of a Pastoral Nomadic Civilization

After having removed the above-mentioned historical influences and changes in the marriage and family laws of the Caucasians, we now arrive at a more or less pure *adat*-law. Considering the marriage and family customary laws as a whole, we must conclude that we have before us a typically pastoral nomadic[9] marriage and family, and this although there are no pastoral nomads in the Caucasus in the strict sense of the word. Though some of the elements we shall now enumerate are also found in other cultures (for example, adultery is sometimes punished as severely by food-gatherers as by pastoral nomads), it is not the individual example we wish to stress but rather the entire institution of marriage and family taken as a whole. It should also be noted that the following summary is only an incomplete and general one: for details, therefore, the reader must look up the references given.

[595] (1) We have seen, for example, how widespread *polygyny* was among the North Caucasians.[10] We fully agree with Briffault, who has shown that all pastoral societies and societies which have passed "through a prolonged pastoral stage are all without exception in the highest degree polygamous."[11]

[597] (2) The *atalyk*,[12]

[3-94] (3) the *levirate*,[13]

(4) *patrilocality*,[14]

[7] Kovalevskij, *Zakon*, I, p. 136.

[8] Kovalevskij, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 139 f. He treats of these influences in detail in *op. cit.*, I, pp. 83—122.

[9] By pastoral nomadic we understand the various customs and laws commonly found among all the pastoral nomadic Turco-Mongols and Indo-Europeans. Many of the components of the Semitic and Hamitic cultures are also pastoral nomadic. Whether the pastoral nomadic culture is a primary (i. e., immediately following upon the food-gathering stage, being the oldest form of animal-breeding) or only secondary or even tertiary (i. e., the result of later specialization, a further development of a pastoral-agrarian culture) does not affect our analysis nor any of our conclusions.

[10] *Supra*, pp. 39—50.

[11] *The Mothers*, II, p. 256.

[12] *Supra*, p. 57.

[13] *Supra*, pp. 71—75.

[14] *Supra*, pp. 124 f.